

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 16, 2002. Claims 1-4, 12-15, and 21-24 are presented for examination. Claims 5-10, 16-20, and 25-29 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Claims 1, 12, and 21, the only claims in independent form, have been amended to define Applicants' invention more clearly. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

As an initial matter, a copy of the PTO-1449 form from the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) submitted on May 16, 2002, was returned with the Office Action, with all of the listed references initialed except the reference entitled "Net-surfing School, For smoother operation." Applicants respectfully request return of a copy of that PTO-1449 form with all the listed references initialed, or at least a reason why the above-identified reference was not initialed.

Also, IDSs and corresponding PTO-1449 forms were submitted on December 12, 2002, and January 22, 2003. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to return an initialed copy of those PTO-1449 forms, indicating that the references listed thereon have been considered and made of record in the present application. (Applicants note that the IDSs likely were not received by the Examiner until after the Office Action was mailed.)

The Office Action states that Claims 1-4, 10, 12-15, and 21-24 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,297,042 (Morita) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,592,375 (Salmon et al.), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,890,152 (Rapaport et al.); and that Claims 5-7, 16-18, and 25-27 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable

over Morita in view of Salmon et al.; and that Claims 8, 9, 19, 20, 28, and 29 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morita in view of Salmon et al. and Rapaport et al., and further in view of Japanese Publication No. 7-044,567 (Sato). Cancellation of Claims 5-10, 16-20, and 25-29 renders their rejections moot. Applicants submit that independent Claims 1, 12, and 21, together with the claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

An aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is directed to a search method, which searches for output information strongly related to input information from a plurality of candidate bodies of information. The method includes a keyword list generating step, an arithmetic step, a selection step, and an output step.

In the keyword list generation step, one or more keywords typically representing information corresponding to the input information and each of the plurality of candidate bodies of information is extracted, a weight value that is set in association with the input information and each of the plurality of bodies of candidate information is extracted, and a keyword list is generated. In the arithmetic step, a predetermined arithmetic operation for the weight value of each keyword of the input information and the weight value of each keyword of each of the plurality of candidate bodies of information is executed.

In the selection step, output information from the plurality of candidate bodies of information is selected, based on arithmetic results obtained by performing the predetermined arithmetic operation for substantially all keywords of each of the plurality of candidate bodies of information in the arithmetic step. In the output step, a layout of the output information to be

printed on a paper sheet is determined, based on the arithmetic results, and the input information is outputted together with the output information placed on the paper sheet at the determined layout.

The weight value is a numerical value with "-" or "+" given to each keyword in consideration of a respective universally accepted idea on the contents of each of the keywords. The "-" and the "+" mean that the keyword has negative and positive contents, respectively, with respect to its corresponding one of the universally accepted ideas.

An important feature of Claim 1 is that the search method determines a suitable layout of, for example, advertisement information (output information) to be printed on a paper sheet based on a predetermined arithmetic operation. The user-requested information (input information) is outputted together with the advertisement information (output information) placed at the determined layout on the paper sheet. (It should be understood that the present invention is not limited to output information being advertisement information, but also encompasses other output information.)

Morita relates to a keyword-associative document retrieval system.

Apparently, Morita discloses retrieval of a document using a retrieval condition that includes one or more keywords. Salmon et al. relates to a system for brokering transactions between sellers and buyers of goods/services. Apparently, Salmon et al. teaches that the use of interactive interfaces for buyers and sellers to enter and receive information. Rapaport et al. relates to a system for obtaining media files from the Internet. Apparently, Rapaport et al. teaches the use of a Personal Profile database for storing user information, and a Personal Feedback browser for

selecting media files based on the user information stored in the Personal Profile database.

Applicants submit that a combination of Morita, Salmon et al., and Rapaport et al., assuming such combination would even be permissible, would fail to teach or suggest a search method that includes "an output step, of determining a layout of the output information to be printed on a paper sheet based on the arithmetic results, and of outputting the input information together with the output information placed on the paper sheet at the determined layout," as recited in Claim 1 as amended.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Independent Claims 12 and 21 include a feature similar to that discussed above, in which a layout of output information is determined so that the output information is placed on a paper sheet at the determined layout and outputted together with input information. Therefore, those claims also are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

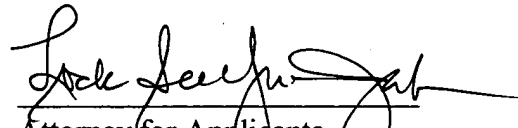
This Amendment After Final Action is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance and, therefore, its entry is believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and

reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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